

political affiliation, no matter from what walk of life -- all Canadians have an enormous stake in the way in which we respond to the challenge of a fiercely competitive global marketplace.

All Canadians must be part of the solution to Canada's competitiveness. It is not enough to lay the responsibility at the feet of government, or business, or the unions, or the education system. The challenge is complex. Solutions are many and varied. We will not secure our future prosperity by invoking one single change that will solve our economic problems. Rather, we must implement many changes which will improve our competitive ability.

The solutions will build upon the Agenda for Economic Renewal that has been in place since 1984. The Agenda has set the environment for the choices we must make now.

Deficit reduction, deregulation, and privatization; modernizing and streamlining Canada's intellectual property laws; the removal of the federal sales tax on manufacturing; trade promotion through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and negotiations for a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): these have all helped to clear the ground so that we can begin -- together -- to build a strategy for prosperity.

I am particularly delighted to announce that two very distinguished Canadians, Mr. David McCamus and Mme. Marie-Josée Drouin, have agreed to act as co-chairpersons of the Steering Committee, in its tasks of managing the public consultations and developing a plan of action. The Steering Group will be made up of representatives from the business, academic, labour and scientific communities. The Group will consult with communities across the country, as well as provincial governments and other national organizations. In addition, it will benefit from specific industry discussions conducted by Cabinet Ministers.

But it is essential that we forge a new alliance between all parties to steer the economy in a direction beneficial for all. The competitive challenges we face cannot be overcome by depending on the creativity, skills and ingenuity of any one group in society. We all -- employers, employees, students, teachers, parents and, yes, even government -- we all are affected by the competitive challenges. We are all stakeholders in finding effective ways of meeting the challenges.

Why must we consult? Why not act right now? Aren't there programs and policies that the government can implement right away? Yes there are. And yes, the government is indeed moving quickly on a wide number of areas: Canada Scholarships to encourage more of our brightest young minds to pursue studies in natural sciences and engineering; networks of Centres of